

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

651.266.8640

Saint Paul City Council's Ward 4 E-Newsletter Volume 8, October/November 2008

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Pedestrian & Bicyclist Safety Efforts

My Legislative Aide Samantha Henningson and I have been working with local partners including district councils, St. Paul/Ramsey County Public Health, Saint Paul Smart-Trips, Transit for Livable communities, and others, to develop a pilot pedestrian safety campaign on north Snelling Avenue. The education and enforcement campaign on north Snelling happened October 14-17. The goal has been to educate neighbors, pedestrians, and drivers about their rights and responsibilities - specifically related to the MN Crosswalk Law

([https://webrh12.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=169.21](https://web.archive.org/web/20120112111112/http://webrh12.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=169.21)). The idea is to create a locally based effort that can be fine-tuned and replicated around the Ward, the City and elsewhere.

The recent death of four metro area bicyclists, including one in Saint Paul, has led to a great deal of media coverage and discussion about what's going on and why. Making bicycling and walking safe and appealing in Saint Paul is critical to the livability and sustainability of our city, and as someone who walks and bikes all the time, and who has two kids who bike and walk around the neighborhood, this is a deeply personal issue for me.

In the past three years, 453 pedestrian-vehicle and 322 bicycle-vehicle crashes have been reported to the Saint Paul Police. Overall in Minnesota, the rate of auto/pedestrian crashes has been declining, but there have been modest increases in the rates of serious injury and death resulting from these crashes (likely indicating faster moving vehicles). As far as crashes involving bicycles, we have probably been seeing more car/bicycle crashes in part because more people are bicycling (documented recently by Transit for Livable Communities and the US Census Bureau). However, contrary to some of the recent media coverage, this does not mean that bicycling is getting more dangerous. The experience across the world has been that there is safety in numbers for both pedestrians and cyclists - that the more people bike and walk, the more motorists become aware of their presence and the crash rate typically goes down.

As motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in our community, we all have a role to play in contributing to the solution to this problem.

Check out my op-ed pieces in the Midway Como Monitor

(<http://www.monitorsaintpaul.com/Graphics%20Folder/oct08.pdf> -- page 7) and Pioneer Press

(http://www.twincities.com/ci_10738393?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com)

These websites are great resources for learning the rules of the road:

www.smart-trips.org

www.bikewalktwincities.org

www.sharetheroadmn.org

This is a solvable problem, and that solution is us. Whether we're walking, bicycling, or driving, if we know and follow the rules of the road, and watch out for others, everyone's safety and well-being will improve.

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Reporting Incidents to the Police Department

Recent incidents and neighborhood meetings have made me aware that while neighbors know that the police are key partners to creating great neighborhoods, it's not always obvious how communication is supposed to work. I get calls from residents wondering what number they are supposed to call and for what types of situations. I thought it would be helpful to briefly outline this information, as well as let you know how to report effectively.

Regardless of what you're calling about, the more detail you can offer the communications center staff member the better. Be sure to communicate this information:

- The address where the activity is taking place (not your address, unless they ask for that)
- Exactly what is happening
- Specific descriptions of any person or vehicle involved (license plate numbers are great, but do not put yourself at risk to get that information)

The more information the police have about an incident, and the more complete the reporting is of ongoing problems, the more likely it is that police department intervention can be successful. Communicating and sharing information with your neighbors, district council, and/or block club is also important so that others are aware of what's going on and can help keep an eye out.

If, for whatever reason, you are unsatisfied with the response you get from the communications center, you have every right to ask to speak with a manager, as a manager is on duty at all times.

Numbers to call:

In the case of an emergency, call 911

For non-emergency police calls and for information, call 651-291-1111

In the case of a recreational fire that is obnoxious, call 911 and a fire team will come out. Many people hesitate to call 911 for this purpose, but Fire Marshal Steve Zaccard has assured me that this is appropriate. For more on recreational fires, see <http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentView.asp?DID=3475>

To report graffiti:

The most effective way to reduce future graffiti is to remove it as soon as possible.

1. If vandalism is in progress, call 911.
2. Report graffiti on private property at 291-1111. Vandalism of public property can be reported at 266-8989.
3. If you choose to remove graffiti on your property yourself, photograph it first. Removal tips are attached.
4. The City will remove graffiti free of charge. You'll need to report it and fill out and return the waiver that will be sent to you. It may take around a week for graffiti to be removed. If you're not getting timely clean-up, with City complaint line is 266-8989. The City cannot match paint exactly, but they do have great products to remove paint from brick, stone, etc.

For more information about the Saint Paul Police, please visit their website: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.asp?nid=461>

Light Rail Project Update

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The light rail project continues to move ahead, and I continue to work to address potential problems such as the loss of on-street parking and the need to ensure that the Hamline, Victoria, and Western stations get built as soon as possible. Visit this site to see what the City and Met Council are doing in the short, mid-, and long term to address parking issues along the Central Corridor: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ParkingStrategies.pdf>. As for the three "missing" stations, the Counties Transitway Improvement Board (CTIB) is poised to fund the construction of the Fridley station on the Northstar commuter rail project (Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis). This use of the newly enacted ¼% sales tax for transitway to fund a "missing" station sets a great precedent for us to get the Hamline, Victoria, and Western stations built if the Central Corridor Project Budget will not allow their construction.

2009 Budget

My colleagues and I have been grappling with the 2009 Budget since mid-August. The State Legislature's 2008 Tax Bill provided some assistance in restoring \$6.167 million of Local Government Aid (LGA), but also set a levy increase limit of 3.9% (with some notable exceptions for public safety and dealing with the foreclosure crisis). The recent statewide increase in the gasoline tax will also bring some modest additional revenue to the City for the maintenance of state-aid roadways.

Of a maximum combined 9.2% levy increase that my colleagues and I approved in September, more than 55% of the projected increase is accounted for by inflation. Budget challenges for 2009 include a sharp decline in revenue from building permits as a result of the economic downturn, increased costs of inspecting and processing vacant/foreclosed housing units, fluctuating prices for fuel and materials, and the need to get city information technology systems that can communicate with one another (the financial/budgeting software that the City uses dates to the early 1980's for example).

In addition, the Mayor has proposed adding 14 new police officers, a new medic unit in the fire department to better respond to medical emergencies without using a 6-person fire crew, and the expansion of the City's Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator position from 1/3-time to full-time. As you might guess, I have been advocating strongly for the expansion of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator position, believing that this position has the potential to make a big impact on the City's livability. The additional police officers would get the City closer to what the Chief has determined would be a full compliment (650 officers) that would allow the department to meet the City's needs and do more community policing. However, given some uncertainties about next year's state budget problems (and possible ramifications for Saint Paul) and the overall trouble in the economy and credit markets, I'm going to continue asking questions about whether or not adding these officers in 2009 is prudent.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and perspectives.

Best,



Be in the know

Living Green, Every Day:

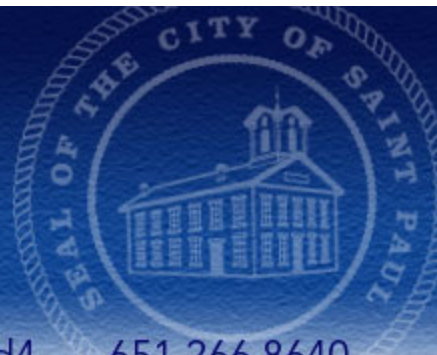
<http://tcdailyplanet.net/article/2008/08/24/living-green-every-day.html>

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Saint Paul Seeks Applicants for Second Shift Commissioners

The City of Saint Paul is now accepting applications for Second Shift Commissioners from those who live or work in Saint Paul and are interested in after-school youth learning activities.

The Saint Paul Second Shift Commission was created in 2006. Participants represent a cross-section of the Saint Paul community and the commission benefits from the perspectives, skills and relationships of many stakeholder groups such as community-based and nonprofit organizations; the faith community; post-secondary institutions; the business community; civic, cultural, and parent groups; K-12 education systems; and libraries and parks and recreation.

Commissioners provide recommendations regarding youth learning activities after school. The positions are appointed for three years.

For more information, contact Kari Denissen, Second Shift coordinator, at kari.denissen@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-266-6426. Submit letters of interest by Thursday, Nov. 20.

Saint Paul Senior Chore Service

The St. Paul Senior Chore Service, a program of the St. Anthony Park Community Council, serves ten neighborhoods in St. Paul including Como, Downtown, Merriam Park, Midway, North End, St. Anthony Park, Summit-University, Thomas Dale/Frogstown, West 7th, and the Westside. The program's goal is to both reach the older adults in your community and find people to provide the services needed to allow people to remain in their homes.

Not being able to age in place is one of the primary fears of many older adults. At the same time, most professionals feel that having elders remain in their homes as long as possible is preferable to other options. However, many people need various forms of assistance in order to do so, depending on their physical circumstances. This is where the St. Paul Senior Chore Service comes in. We match young people from the neighborhood or volunteers of any age to the person who needs service to do the work the person can no longer do. This can include leaf raking, snow shoveling, gardening, window washing, and minor repairs. We especially need groups of volunteers to do gutter cleaning.

Many of our clients are low income people who are profoundly grateful for the assistance. It is not unusual to go to a home and find refreshments waiting for the volunteer along with conversation. Those who help have heard many good stories and always come away feeling that they have done something improve the life of another.

The Chore Service is looking for both older adults who we can help and for young people to fill the needs of those who need our help. If you or someone you know might benefit from the program or be able to volunteer, you can always refer them to Carol Livingston, Program Coordinator or Harriet Mednick, Outreach Coordinator at 651-649-5984.

As always, please pass on the Ward 4 e-news to neighbors and friends. Subscribe by emailing Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us. To unsubscribe, reply with the message "unsubscribe" in the subject line or body of a message.

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